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and the loss of any definite policy at all. "The guild as a self-governing body acquired more and more the mere semblance of existence." "In its economic legislation there is an utter lack of creative ideas; no trace remains of that elasticity, of that power of adaptation to new conditions that had characterized the guild in the time of its greatness." Historians have pointed out how in the Medici family as one generation succeeded another there was a marked decay of commercial talent; the grandsons of Cosimo brought well nigh to bankruptcy a business that their grandfather had left rich, prosperous, and well established. Coincident with this decay of business ability in the governing family was the deterioration of the whole capitalist class. With freedom gone and their organization robbed of the power of self-government, the individual undertakers could no longer bring to the management of their affairs the labor-loving energy and the aggressive, hopeful, and farsighted sagacity that had compelled success in former days. When, therefore, competition developed, they were no longer able to meet it.

THOMAS WALKER PAGE.

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*Commercial Trusts.* By JOHN R. DOS PASSOS. ("Questions of the Day" Series). New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1901. 12mo, pp. viii + 137.

*Les syndicats industriels de producteurs en France et à l'Étranger.* Par PAUL DE ROUSIERS. Paris: Librairie Armand Colin, 1901. 8vo, pp. viii + 290.

THE first of these two books is a reprint of the testimony given by the writer before the Industrial Commission. The book is in no sense a scientific discussion, but rather the plea of an advocate. The argument runs along the somewhat stale line of the desirability of letting "the natural laws of trade alone and they will take care of themselves." The writer takes issue with those who advocate publicity as a check on bad corporate management, insisting that "no man who is not interested [as a stockholder] in a corporation has any right to know anything about it. It is none of his business."

The second book is of a different character. It is a discussion of the three methods of industrial concentration represented respect-

tively by the American trusts, the German cartels, and the French comptoirs. While the presentation is neither exhaustive nor new, it is temperate and scientific. M. Rousiers first points out that American trusts and European syndicates have a common origin in the growth of large businesses and keen competition. He describes the development of trusts, and thinks it has been promoted by the tariff and by railroad discriminations. His analysis is followed by an account of several of the principal trusts and a description of the claims made in their behalf.

The cartels M. Rousiers describes as associations of members of nearly equal strength, formed to prevent excessive competition and low prices. He points out that the degree of concentration of management is less than in the case of trusts, that the cartels are less efficient, and that they are available only in businesses whose products are uniform and not easily replaceable by substitutes. Their weakness lies in the fact that they prevent the elimination of the weaker concerns, while, in his judgment, our trusts bring about this elimination. In this he seems to be in error; for some of our combinations have many lame members supported from the proceeds of the more efficient.

The French comptoirs, according to M. Rousiers, partake less of the character of monopoly than either the trusts or the cartels; indeed, he thinks that conditions for monopoly are less favorable in France than elsewhere. Most of his discussion of the French syndicates is devoted to that of the *Comptoir de Longwy*, an association of producers of metallic goods. The association seems to be rather a pool to prevent loss to the members from changes of price, than an organization to monopolize the industry.

Comparing the three kinds of organizations, the author describes trusts as monopolies, cartels as leagues of mutual defense, and comptoirs as simply commercial agents. The author voices the common opinion that the movement towards concentration is not an artificial one, and that it is likely to do good if intelligently directed against over-production.

The discussion shows the same intelligent appreciation of conditions in other countries which M. Rousiers has shown in his other books.

DAVID KINLEY.